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AVIAN HAVEN

2010

Year End Report

"Go to the sea if you would fish well," advises a proverb. This Thick-billed Murre would no doubt agree; during her stay with us, her favorite food was Atlantic capelin. For her story and more, read on!

Rehabilitation 2010 Overview

We've more than made up for 2009's decrease in case load! In all this year, we cared for 1406 birds (1365 new admissions plus 41 held over from 2009)—about a 15% increase over the totals for 2007 and 2008. Unlike the summer of 2009, the 2010 breeding season seems to have been a baby bird boomer year; we admitted about 650 nestlings. Our most common native species were similar overall to those of previous years, though we saw them in greater numbers: 137 American Robins, 88 Eastern Phoebe, 74 Barred Owls, 67 Mourning Doves, 62 Herring Gulls, 54 American Crows, 44 Blue Jays, 43 Cedar Waxwings, 29 Chimney Swifts, and 28 Ring-billed Gulls. Overall, our raptor counts were similar to previous years. After Barred Owl, the most common species were Broad-winged Hawk (21), Bald Eagle (18), American Kestrel (14) and Osprey (10). Nonnative species counts were 76 Rock Pigeons, 54 European Starlings, 17 English Sparrows.

Among the more rare admissions in our practice were several pelagic species—the Thick-billed Murre shown above (story on p. 2), 2 Dovekies, 2 Black Guillemots, and 2 Leach's Storm Petrels.

Among the 2010 admissions, 653 were nestlings, which were most commonly found on the ground with no prospects for return to a nest. Of the remaining mature birds, a cause of difficulty was reported for 363. The most common were car strikes (154 birds, of which 30% survived), cat predation (69 birds, 19% survival), and window strikes (59 birds, 42% survival). Among the more uncommon causes of injury was a large "spider web" left in a yard as a Halloween decoration. A Barred Owl caught by the wing in this material had abrasions down to the bone, with tissue damage comparable to that in the wing of another owl caught in barbed wire (neither bird survived). Five birds had lead poisoning caused by ingestion of spent ammunition (2 Bald Eagles) or discarded fishing tackle (3 Common Loons); one of the eagles survived.

The remaining sections of the owl compound Terry began in 2009 were finished in July. Our surrogate parent Barred Owls raised two orphaned nestlings; otherwise, late summer was quiet in the compound. But that was soon to change: in the last three months of the year, we admitted 33 Barred Owls, all but two injured by vehicles. Owls do hunt mice after dark, but we typically don't see car-hit birds until after snowfall, when mice may be easier to find on plowed roads than under snow cover. Close examination of the fall casualties for age-related changes in feather pattern suggested that many were birds of the year, just learning to hunt on their own but perhaps lacking the "street smarts" of older individuals. Whatever the reason, we are glad to have the recovery habitats of the new compound, for our year total of 74 for this species was a record for us—more than double our previous high count in 2008. 2010 may have been the Year of the Tiger in the Chinese zodiac, but at Avian Haven, it was the Year of the Barred Owl. ■



The Thick-billed Murre shown on the cover was found in Lisbon on Jan. 26, at least 10 miles inland. She was emaciated and dirty; one foot had an open wound, a fractured toe, and torn webbing, likely complicated by frostbite. The mud on her chest came off in her first swim, but the other problems took longer to resolve. We started the bird on simple liquid foods, and as she began to gain weight, graduated to whole fish. Over the first couple weeks, her waterproofing gradually improved; on Feb. 13, we set up a 150-gallon pool in the infirmary; then moved it outside on Feb. 18. Meanwhile, the foot injuries had also healed, much better than we had hoped at the beginning. By the end of February, everything except the weather looked good; but on March 6, the stormy weather turned into a warm, sunny stretch that would persist for another week. We let the bird go in South Harpswell, and were delighted when the wharf owner told us he saw similar birds in the area regularly. The Murre seemed ecstatic to be back in the ocean; she dove and preened repeatedly, staying close to the dock for about an hour before finally heading out to sea. More photos, including many taken during the release, may be viewed on our 2010 First Quarter Slide Show, which is posted on our website. ■



Special Thanks...

Individuals and Foundations

American Foundation
David Asselin
Baker Street Trust
Lisa Beede and Students
Amy & Bob Campbell
Lewis Cisle
Janika Eckert & Rob Johnston
Kathy Kandziolka
Marilyn Littlefield
Cher & Allan Lord
Montgomery Foundation
William Nichols
Diane Ober
Mary Offutt
Pollie Rawlinson
Carolyn & Steve Richens
Raelene & Ray Rogers
Roy Foundation
Nancy & Charlie Shuman
Marge Sorenson
Elsie Viles

Wildlife Biologists, Veterinarians, and Rehabilitators

Brad Allen
Judy Camuso
Keith Crowley
Russ Danner
Philip deMaynadier
Robin Dyer
Lynne Flaccus
Michele Goodman
Nate Gray
Bill Hanson
Anna Hunt
Eric Holmes
Keel Kemper
Jen Lewis
Jonathan Mays
Mark McCollough
Erica Miller
Kristin Peet
Mark Pokras
Kappy Sprenger
Mark Stadler
Charlie Todd
Flo Tseng



On July 18, John and Mary Lee of Argyle found a juvenile Bald Eagle collapsed on the ground near a brook. Warden Jim Fahey retrieved the bird, then made the first leg of a relay, handing the bird off to Scott in Old Town, with Scott in turn handing off to Vicki in Troy. Around 10 p.m., Vicki delivered a second-year bird with a wound on the lower back. Maggots seethed around the wound; with Vicki assisting, we slathered the areas with an anti-parasitic solution, then started the bird on antibiotics and pain medication. The next morning, we used a pressure sprayer to remove the dead maggots. With the area clean, we could see a good-sized puncture surrounded by a larger area of raw tissue irritated by maggot activity. Although the bird could twitch his tail, he was not able to use his legs. Our x-ray showed the spine intact, but we knew there was soft-tissue damage. It was a week before the bird tried to get up; at first, he needed to lean against a wall for support, but he gradually regained the ability to stand and walk unaided. Flight had never been an issue; a series of upgrades from smaller to larger habitats had him in the flyway around mid-September. After two weeks of exercise, he was released on Oct. 2 at Benton Falls, with Scott and partner Jacqui doing the honors.



Only two days after the Argyle bird arrived, Warden Chris Dyer called for assistance with a juvenile eagle in Pittsfield. Chris had been the first responder, but did not have appropriate capture gear. Terry rounded up what was needed and met Chris at the site; together, they were able to net the bird. This third-year bird had a wing wound loaded with maggots, but fortunately minimal damage to the surrounding flesh and no fractures. Her recovery was more rapid than the Argyle bird's: she moved outside just three days after admission, progressing through a series of ever-larger habitats, moving into the flyway in mid-August. She too was released in Benton Falls, on Aug. 27. Sadly, however, in early January of 2011, she was found dead (identified by her bands) on I-95 near a road-killed carcass on which she had most likely been feeding. There are no guarantees for any graduate of rehab, but we were glad to have given her the chance she deserved after her injury in July. ■



Sprucing up

As already mentioned, the owl compound was completed in 2010. Terry Heitz has designed and built some awesome structures here, but the interlocking habitats and innovative layout of "Fort Strix" was perhaps his best ever. When we all sat down to discuss potential new projects, it was agreed that the need in first place was, for a change, a human habitat—housing for summer college interns. Terry designed a compact but comfortable seasonal cabin, and although construction began late in the season, he accomplished his goal of having it framed and closed in before snowfall. This project addresses Avian Haven's secondary mission of rehab education—training the next generation of wild bird rehabilitators. As soon as weather permits, work will resume, with the

objective of having it ready for occupancy by Memorial Day. "Ready for occupancy" means fully furnished, so we hope any readers with unwanted household items will consider donating them.

The 2010 sections of the owl compound were funded by a grant from The Roy Foundation; donations from Nancy & Charlie Shuman and Marilyn Littlefield; and discounts on building materials from Ellsworth Builders Supply (Belfast). Work on the intern cabin has been made possible to date by discounts from EBS, a bequest from Pollie Rawlinson, and a grant from the Montgomery Foundation.

Thanks to James Skowbo, our home on the Web also had some renovations in 2010, including slide shows featuring some of our favorite (and most photogenic) cases. Links to the slide shows can be found on our home page, www.avianhaven.org.



On the evening of July 9, Linda Dutil of Waterville was in her garden when she heard squawking. Turning around, she saw a little bird flopping on the ground. Having watched Merlins on the property for the previous few weeks, she knew instantly what it was. There were cats about, but Linda scooped up the baby before one of the cats found the bird. We admitted the thin but uninjured nestling the next morning. In such circumstances, we would normally fatten a youngster up a bit and return it to its nest as soon as possible. There was just one problem: though the Dutils had been aware of and keenly interested in parental activities, the location of the nest was unknown. A mutual friend, ornithologist Louis Bevier, also had been watching the parents. He was out of town when the youngster tumbled, but returned several days later; on the 15th, he found the nest by tracking the sound of a young bird. It was hard to see the contents of the nest, but Louis could make out at least one downy head. The Merlins were using an old crow nest in a pine tree on property belonging to a neighbor named Annette, who was happy to cooperate. But now there was another problem: the nest was about 50' up in the tree.



Fortunately, that problem also had a solution; we contacted our friend Bill Hanson, a wildlife biologist with NextEra Energy. Because part of his job is monitoring raptor nests that are often quite high, he is an expert climber. Bill agreed to a reconnaissance mission, but would not be able to free up time for nearly a week. Meanwhile, we continued to minimize human contact with the youngster; his "nest" was close to ceiling height, and a mirror provided a visual nestmate. On July 21, we sent the bird back to Waterville to meet Bill. He inspected the tree and judged the climb doable; after donning his gear, he made his way up toward the nest. Once situated, Bill dropped a rope; his colleague Jay placed the youngster in a bag, which Bill carefully hoisted. Not wanting to risk alarming any birds still in the nest, he had climbed only within overhead reach. None of the observers

on the ground could tell whether the nest had another occupant, but our bird was safely returned. A few hours later, both parents were near the tree, and Louis saw one fly to the nest with prey in its talons.

On July 24, Annette called Linda to say "There are a lot of birds up there!" Linda went right over, and e-mailed a short while later to report FOUR juvenile Merlins on branches near the nest, calling loudly for food, which the parents were regularly providing. Within a few days, the youngsters were venturing farther from the nest tree—sometimes perching on the Dutils' house or overhead wires. Their flight skills continued to improve; early in August, Linda saw two juveniles chasing an adult flying with food in talons. On Aug. 17, when the Dutils returned from a short trip out of town, the Merlins were gone. ■



Photography in this story by Linda Dutil

Businesses and Organizations

Aerie East
Animal Wellness Center
Belfast Cooperative
Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery
Dutton's Nursery & Greenhouse
Ellsworth Builders Supply
Fosters Family Pet Store
Improvbox
Little River Veterinary Hospital
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Maine Dept. of Marine Resources
Maine Fish Health Laboratory
Maine Warden Service
Maine Wildlife Park
Microtechnologies
Next Era Energy
Petco (Augusta)
The Raptor Trust
Sand Hill Strawberry Farm
Shady Hollow Farm
Unity College
Walmart (Augusta)
Wind Over Wings

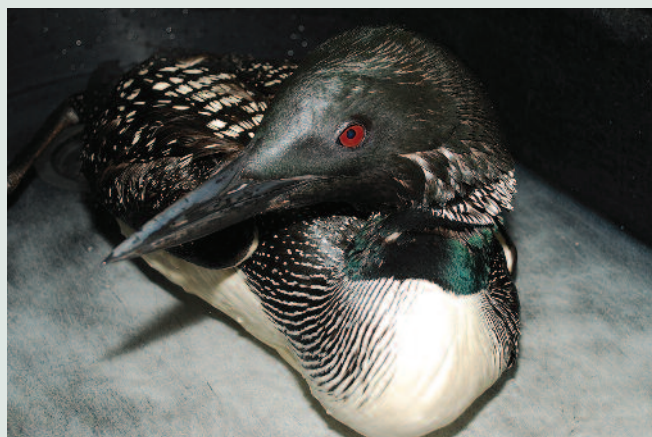
"Frequent Flier" Volunteer Transporters

Jean Adamson
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Lloyd Ferriss & Jane Frost
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Mary Lou & Nelson Gamage
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George Klueber & Becky Rivers
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Vicki Kupferman
Don Lecker
Caron Leichtman
Carmine Leo
Eleanor & Bill Murley
Bill Reid
Tami & Ed Slowey
Susan Smith Hudson
George Stone
Martha Tyler
Donna Wade

The leading cause of death among adult Common Loons in Maine is lead poisoning from fishing gear. Lead sinkers and jigs on lake bottoms are swallowed, having been mistaken for pebbles that provide grinding action in the bird's digestive tract. By the time lead-poisoned loons are sick enough to beach themselves, it is too late to save them. We know of none in New England that has survived lead ingestion, even with surgical intervention. However, this past summer, a bird from Lake Megunticook nearly became the first.

On Aug. 18, Lake Warden Ken Bailey noticed from his boat an adult Common Loon that, to his practiced eye, was "not acting right." He maneuvered her into shallow water and netted her, then called us on his cell phone as he headed to the boat ramp. We quickly arranged for volunteer Kathy to meet him and begin a relay that got the bird here within a couple of hours of Ken's call. Our x-ray revealed a jig in the bird's gizzard; the level of lead in the blood was high, but not as high as we typically have seen. We started the bird on a chelating agent and called Dean Domeyer, a Boothbay veterinarian who had once offered to try endoscopic removal of lead if we ever admitted a bird healthy enough to tolerate the procedure. By luck, he was free the next day. With Marc monitoring the bird's reaction to anesthesia, Dr. Domeyer went to work. It was a long and difficult procedure, but his patience and skill prevailed, and the jig (shown in this photo) was removed.



Over the next week, the bird's blood lead level dropped to a safer level. But there were persisting indications of anemia in her bloodwork; further, she was losing a little weight despite eating well. Still, she was waterproof, and in good enough shape for diving to catch live minnows. We were cautiously optimistic, and near the end of August, thought we might be able to release her. But it was not to be. On the afternoon of Sept. 1, she seemed unusually listless. We brought her inside earlier than usual that day; she died around 8 p.m. Mark Pokras, wildlife veterinarian at Tufts and expert on loon biology, agreed to perform the necropsy, and we overnight-mailed the body to MA. His only significant finding was a gastritis/enteritis, with hemorrhaging into the GI tract. Dr. Pokras speculated that her death was an indirect result of an opportunistic infection that got the upper hand in a bird weakened by the effects of lead poisoning.

Although the state banned the sale of lead sinkers weighing less than 1/2 ounce in 2002, it is still legal to sell lead-headed jigs, and legal to use all lead-based tackle. But anglers can make a better choice. Here in Maine, old lead tackle can be swapped for loon-safe alternatives through the Soil and Water Conservation District Lead Fishing Tackle Exchange Program. Contact information for participating counties can be found at www.mainewcs.org.



Northern Mockingbirds are not common in our practice, but in 2010, we raised ten of them: a clutch of four originally from Auburn (one of which is shown to the left), two from Bangor, and four from Topsham. These last four had been kept for a week by a family that fed them a gruel of egg, hamburger and cream. We have admitted many nestlings fed inappropriate diets by poorly informed members of the public, but in all our years, had seen none in worse shape than these. They were covered with dried, foul-smelling food remains, but

of more concern was metabolic bone disease resulting from a diet with inadequate calcium. Two of the birds could not move their legs at all; only one could stand without falling over. Initially we were not optimistic, and thought some would eventually have to be euthanized. But we cleaned them up, and started them on calcium supplements along with foods appropriate for growing mockingbirds. Braces were put on the two with no use of legs; in about a week, one of these two could stand and even take a few halting steps. The other remained down, but could be seen trying to get up; a few days later, that second bird stood for the first time. Soon, all four birds were attempting short flights; on Aug. 31, we moved them to a small outdoor cage, then upgraded them to a larger flight habitat on Sept. 5. When they were released on Sept. 11, these lucky survivors of an injurious interlude all flew strong and true. For more photos of these birds, view our 2010 Third Quarter Slide Show. ■



Ken called us about another Loon from Megunticook on Aug. 28, this time a juvenile trying to climb onto the back of an adult, though too large to ride there. That a mostly grown youngster would seek a parent's back was a sign to Ken that something was wrong, and we repeated the rescue relay of a few weeks earlier. An x-ray revealed a possible hairline fracture in the right leg as well as a more definite toe fracture. The next morning, we arranged transportation to our Bridgton colleague Kappy Sprenger, a loon specialist who had other juveniles at the time. A couple days after arriving there, the bird defecated fresh blood—a sign of internal injury. That in combination with leg problems led to a suspicion of a boat strike. The bird's other problem, a loss of waterproofing, might have been attributable to exposure to boat fuel or exhaust. Restoring waterproofing was not easy with this bird, but after two baths in a Dawn® solution, Kappy thought the problem finally solved. On Sept. 10, she transferred the bird back to us for release on his home lake. But when we put the bird in our pool the next morning, it was evident that waterproofing had again been lost.

Many substances can contaminate feathers, leading to a failure of waterproofing. Multiple baths may be necessary for thorough cleaning, after which waterproofing can be restored through alternations of swimming with drying plus the bird's own preening. Although we discussed transferring the bird back to Kappy for continued care, she had five other Loons at that time, and felt that we could do as much as she could for this particular individual. So over the course of the next few weeks, we gave the bird two additional baths, and tried to increase the proportion of water time to dry time (during which he often napped, as shown in this photo). After about 10 days, we were making at least minimal progress; but though he could remain in water for an hour or two at a time, he was developing pressure sores on his feet from all the time spent dry-docked. We replaced the usual netted frames with soft pillows, and changed their covers frequently to avoid contaminating feathers with droppings. The largest sore was at the site of the original toe fracture; if it

became infected, infection would likely spread to bone. We started the bird on antibiotics, and overnight, applied topical salves covered with booties. There was an urgent need for the bird to spend more time in water, and fortunately, waterproofing continued to improve. On Oct. 2, she stayed in the pool for 9 straight hours without becoming wet, and on Oct. 9, we were able to leave her in overnight. Meanwhile, we had sent photos and x-rays of the feet to Dr. Pokras; his advice was to release the bird at the ocean as soon as possible. The salt water would help the feet heal; plus, having been in captivity for 6 weeks, the bird might not have the flight muscles needed to leave the lake by ice-in. There was no disagreement with that logic. On Oct. 12, we released the bird at the river basin section of Ducktrap Harbor. We released a second juvenile there as well, one that had tumbled over the spillway between upper and lower sections of the Megunticook River the previous day, landing in a shallow stream with insufficient room for take-off. The releases went well, as can be seen from these photos. Just before dark that day, Shelley checked the site; she saw only one

Loon, beached on a mudflat across the basin from the parking area. She believed this individual to be the Lake bird, given his recent history of spending nights out of water.

For several days, Shelley plus volunteers Amy and Susan returned to Ducktrap. On the 13th, a juvenile Loon was seen several times both in the basin and the harbor; on the basis of behavior, it was judged to be the Lake bird, and as darkness fell, was in the basin near where a bird had beached the previous evening. The following morning, Susan watched this individual repeatedly swim the channel between the basin and the open water of the harbor, sometimes underwater and sometimes on the surface. Late that afternoon, the basin was empty, but Amy saw a juvenile close to shore near a pier at the south end of the harbor. That night, a nor'easter came in, and through the storm of the following day, no birds were seen in the basin. But the next morning, as the skies cleared, Susan saw TWO juvenile Loons near the pier, headed south toward Lincolnville.



Amy Campbell



Amy Campbell

On June 25, we were brought a juvenile Bobolink found in a hayfield that was being mowed. This scenario is not uncommon, for Bobolinks nest on the ground in meadows or fields. Nestlings mature rapidly, and are capable of running by day 7, typically leaving the nest around day 10 or 11 despite being unable to fly for perhaps another week. After nests have been vacated,



several families form a flock, within which youngsters are fed by their parents for about a month. But when the field is disturbed by mowing, nests may be destroyed, or mobile juveniles separated from their families. The rescuers of this bird tried unsuccessfully to convince their neighbors to postpone haying; the flock could not be found, so a family reunion was not possible. But the bird thrived during her stay with us, and, as this photo illustrates, seemed particularly to love bathing.

A second Bobolink admitted on July 3 had a more troubling history. It had been taken from a field by a girl who judged it “injured” and was “nursing it back to health” by feeding bread soaked in milk. She was too young to drive, and her mother too busy to travel more than the few miles between their home and the Maine Wildlife Park in Gray. We arranged for bird keeper Mark Jordan to accept the orphan, which we identified from a digital photo Mark e-mailed. A three-person relay got the bird here by nightfall. The natural diet of an immature Bobolink is invertebrates, not grains, and all birds are lactose-intolerant (they are not mammals). This bird was not injured, but sick from inappropriate food; it took more than a week for digestive difficulties to resolve. For part of this period, he shared an indoor habitat with the first Bobolink, but the earlier bird had already been in an outdoor flight for a week by the time the second had gained enough weight to join her on July 20. The birds were released together into a group of Bobolinks at the agricultural fields of the Unity College campus on July 27.

As a species, Bobolinks are in decline in the United States. Relative to fifty years ago, hayfield areas are not only smaller but also cut earlier, with mowing now often coinciding with nesting. In order to minimize adverse impacts, one guideline for Maine is to postpone mowing until at least mid-July, with dates into August even better for those who can delay longer. Fields mowed in sequential strips can allow families with mobile juveniles to remain on their territory until the youngsters are able to fly. ■



Helpers at the Nest

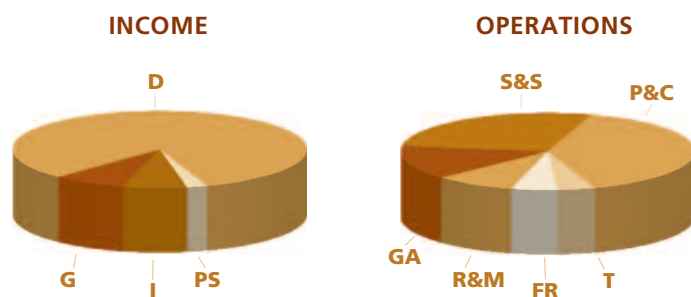
The cohesion and harmony of our summer onsite team was once again remarkable. Despite the hard work, stress and frustrations of many long, busy days, no harsh words were spoken and many smiles were exchanged (chocolate helped make this possible). The core comprised clinic manager Shelley Spanswick, plus Glori Berry and Abby Everleth. As usual, Shelley did a fantastic job, particularly with procedures such as eye exams and wound management; on Shelley’s days off, Abby stepped into first position. Filling in the remaining slots were Amy Campbell, Kelani Cundy, Sarah Cunningham, Amy Dillon, Deb Hensley, Caitie Homan, Laura Lecker, Beth Settlemeyer, Jerry Stefansky, Che Sweetland, and Janet Wiseley. In addition to feeding and cleaning up after nestlings, each of these individuals helped in other ways. Glori took photos; Jerry (and wife Dee Dee) made sure the humans got enough to eat. Amy D. and Laura provided offsite emergency care for birds that could not be transported here immediately; Deb (and Improvox) sang for us. Amy C. brought fruit and other bird goodies; Kelani (and Ron Durgin) painted. Janet and Caitie tackled unpopular cleaning projects; Sarah sent us Unity College students. Che provided a home for several domestic birds; Beth finished her apprenticeship and will be opening a practice of her own in Friendship.

When repair of an injury required surgical intervention, Dr. Judy Herman gave generously of her skills and lunch hours. As a board member, she provided other kinds of support and counsel, as did Allen Stehle; we are grateful to both. Our off-site team of volunteers who transport birds from surrounding towns to Avian Haven helped save many lives; some made more than a dozen trips in 2010. Additional members of our family are organizations and individuals that provide assistance of many different kinds, including financial

contributions as well as non-cash support in the form of donated goods or services, discounts, or shared expertise. Some are named in the main text; others may be found in the sidebars on pages 2 and 3. Due to space limitations, we can’t cite all who have helped, but we appreciate every one as much as those mentioned in print.

Nest Eggs

In the past few years, most of our income has come from foundation and trust grants; however, in 2010, a generous estate bequest shifted that balance. As can be seen on the Income chart, about 80% of our income came from the total of individual and business donations (D), with additional sources of revenue from investments (I) and program services (PS). On the other side of the ledger, capital expenditures (buildings and equipment) comprised about 44% of our outflow. Proportions of the remaining 56% in various operating expense categories are shown in the Operations chart. The largest portion was payroll and other compensation (P&C), followed closely by supplies and services (S&S). Other types of expenses shown on the chart are general administration (GA), repairs and maintenance (R&M), fundraising (FR), and travel (T).



We admitted no nestling Chimney Swifts in 2009; but were glad to see them again in 2010, for their reappearance indicated a more successful breeding season for the species. We took in seven clutches plus several singletons from mid-July through mid-August. Swifts are highly communal; orphans raised in rehab should be released into flocks, which are most readily found near dusk, when birds are doing their social flights low in the sky prior to dropping into a roost chimney for the night. But finding communal roosts is not always easy in Maine, where migration seems to get underway almost as soon as youngsters have fledged. George, a volunteer and birder who particularly likes Swifts, monitors roosts in Belfast. Early in August, nearly 30 birds had entered a chimney on Church Street, so when our first group of eight birds was ready to go on Aug. 7, we released them there. But as George, his wife Becky, and another volunteer, Janet, continued to watch that chimney over the next few days, the number going in for the night dropped by more than half. Still, we thought the roost would hold long enough for us to release one more group, and we took three birds there on Aug. 12. When we saw Swifts in the sky, we let ours go to join them. But although at times there were as many as 20 overhead, only eight entered the chimney, and from their rapid and practiced head-first drops, we thought none of them ours. The next evening, Janet saw only two at Church Street, and none subsequently. But we still had quite a few more growing youngsters.

Diane knew that Ted from Merrymeeting Audubon had been monitoring Swifts on their spring migration; she contacted him to ask whether there was current activity at any roosts he knew of. Ted e-mailed back with recent counts for several chimneys; meanwhile, Lisbon volunteers Alan and Linda checked out



a couple other sites that had spring occupants. On Aug. 16, Ted saw 28 birds enter a chimney in Brunswick; Anna from Chewonki counted 39 there on the 17th. That was the largest of the area roosts checked that week, so Alan and Linda took our next group of three there, meeting Anna for release on the 18th. Only 22 birds went in, and by the next evening, just half that number remained.

We knew the Brunswick roost would be empty before any more of our birds were ready, but we also knew where to find Swifts farther south on their migration toward the Amazon basin.

For some years, our last Swifts of the season have been released at an enormous roost in Ridgewood, NJ. Each year, the roost monitor, Kurt, sends us counts (made from slow-motion video playback) from the time the roost forms in August until it empties in October. We were confident of at least 1,000 birds in early September, and were not disappointed. Kurt's count was 1,900 on Sept. 8, the day Marc released our next six birds there. We were still left with three from a very late clutch, but the number at Ridgewood was still climbing: 2,950 on Sept. 15. Shelley took our last group down on Sept. 17. Kurt's estimate dropped that night to around 2,600, but the roost set its season high of 3,030 on Oct. 2. Over the next two weeks, birds moved out rapidly, and the roost officially emptied on Oct. 17. For more information about Ridgewood, including a video, visit Kurt's roost page at <http://members.aceweb.com/elkumu/SwiftRoost.html>. ■



In Closing...

Our admissions this year suggested that 2010 was a baby boomer season for many species. But many challenges confront juveniles learning to survive on their own, and some habitats may lack sufficient resources to sustain a resident population increase. The large number of Barred Owls having fatal encounters with vehicles was a sobering reality in the fall of our year. Each individual represented an unfulfilled hope, yet even in death, the tools of their trade remained stunning: their large, sensitive eyes; sharp, curved talons; and silent, fringed feathers. Among the living, they are even more impressive; we marveled daily as we monitored their recovery from fractures and head trauma, or listened to them hooting at night among the flight habitats. But rehabilitators have no exclusive window into their world. And: "To know the owls ... you don't need a degree from Cornell or a grant from Exxon. You needn't go on exotic safaris or buy a lot of expensive gadgets. Only pay heed to whatever district you live in and listen to the night surrounding you: there's more going on under your own window than you can absorb in a full and fruitful lifetime" (Jonathan Maslow, *The Owl Papers*). Until next year—

Diane & Marc

Diane Winn & Marc Payne
Avian Haven Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center • Freedom, ME
207-382-6761 • www.avianhaven.org



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Photo and Drawing by Terry Heitz

Intern Cabin for 2011

Completed
Owl Compound

To help us reduce our use of forest resources, let us know by e-mail (info@avianhaven.org) if we may send future issues of this report to you electronically. Folks on our e-mailing list also receive notices of newly posted slide shows.

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